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AUTHOR	Thurlow, Martha; Liu, Kristin; Weiser, Sarah; El Sawaf, Hamdy
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ABSTRACT

This report discusses the findings of a survey of the 50 states that investigated how state graduation requirements apply to students with limited English proficiency (LEP) and whether students with LEP receive a standard diploma upon completion of their studies or some type of modified exit document. Results found a minimum graduation requirement for 44 states was the successful completion of Carnegie course units. In addition to course unit requirements, 19 states require their students to participate in and pass an exit exam. Students with LEP, in general, must meet the same requirements as other students in general education to receive a high school diploma. They are required to meet the same course unit requirements and, if applicable, generally are required to take the same exit exam and pass with the same cut-off score. Only Minnesota provides students with LEP the option of taking a version of the exit exam that has been translated into his or her native language and having a notation on the transcript that indicates the translation. A summary of each state's high school graduation requirements, including diploma options and issues pertaining to students with LEP, is provided in the appendix. (Contains 18 references.) (CR)

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STATE ASSESSMENT SERIES
Minnesota Report 13

High School Graduation Requirements in the U.S. for Students with Limited English Proficiency

Minnesota Assessment Project

Project Staff:
Constance Anderson • Cathy Wagner • Michael Tillman
Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Project Advisors:
Karon Hergenhahn • Nancy Larson • Bounlieng Phommasouvanh • Carol Quest • Marilyn Sorensen • Barbara Jo Stahl • Elizabeth Watkins
Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Prepared By:
Martha Thurlow • Kristin Liu • Sarah Weiser • Hamdy El Sawaf
University of Minnesota

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The Minnesota Assessment Project is a four-year, federally funded effort awarded to the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. The project's goal is to promote and evaluate the participation of students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities in Minnesota's Graduation Standards. Specifically, the project will examine ways in which students with limited English and students with disabilities can participate in the Basic Standards Exams of reading, mathematics and written composition and in the performance-based assessments of the high standards in the Profile of Learning.

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Overview

News reports continue to confirm the importance of graduating from high school, both for obtaining post high school employment (National Center for Education Statistics, 1995), and for achieving higher earnings over time (Coley, 1995). Graduation from high school thus has very real and significant consequences for individual students. Graduation from high school also is now viewed as an essential outcome of the educational system in the United States. Having sufficient numbers of students graduate is viewed as important to our nation's competitiveness in a global society. This was not always so (Christenson, Thurlow, & Sinclair, in press). In the early to mid part of this century, it was still a viable alternative for a young person to leave school before graduation and to expect to find a decent job that would provide a future for that individual and a family. This is no longer true.

High school graduation today is viewed as so important that increasing the graduation rate is one of our nation's educational goals. Goal 2, first endorsed by the governors and the president of the United States in 1989, and now codified in law through *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (Public Law 103-227), states that "by the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent." This goal is supported by two objectives that call for: (1) a significant reduction in school dropout rates, along with the successful return and graduation of 75% of those who have already dropped out, and (2) a reduction in the gap between the high school graduation rates of students with minority and non-minority backgrounds.

Goals 2000 is very clear in its language that goals, objectives, and supports for reform are for all students, and that "all students" includes students with limited English proficiency (LEP). According to the Federal definition, a student is LEP if he or she

> has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and whose difficulties may deny such individual the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English or to participate fully in our society due to one or more of the following reasons:
>
> - was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant;
> - is a native American or Alaska native or who is a native resident of the outlying areas and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had significant impact on such individual's level of English language proficiency; or
> - is migratory and whose native language is other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant. (sec. 7501)

When Goal 2 states that the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent, it is to be assumed that calculation of the percentage is based on all students, including those served in special programs such as English as a Second Language (ESL) and Bilingual Education (BE) programs. The need to understand the requirements for students with LEP to graduate, and to examine the possible implications for policy, is particularly important because of the finding that many students experience significant negative outcomes when they do not earn a high school or equivalent diploma (Affleck, Edgar, Levine, & Kortering, 1990; Bruininks, Thurlow, Lewis, & Larson, 1988; Edgar, 1987; Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985; McDill, Natrello, & Pallas, 1985; Wagner, 1992).

While increasing graduation rates is a national goal, supported by a national law, there is no mention in the law or the goal of what is required of a student to graduate. Requirements for high school graduation are not set by the U.S. Department of Education. Rather, they are set either through state regulations or by local districts in concert with general state guidelines.

Now, at the same time that our nation has set a 90% high school completion rate as a goal to be reached by the year 2000, many states (and districts) have been increasing high school graduation requirements as part of an overall education reform movement (Medrich, Brown, Henke, Ross, & McArthur, 1992). The requirements that states or local education agencies set for graduation can range from a certain number of class credits, earned in specific areas, to the successful passing of minimum competency tests, high school exit exams, or a series of benchmark exams. They also may require almost any combination of these. The diversity in possible requirements for graduating from school is complicated by a similarly diverse set of possible types of graduation documents. The high school diploma is not the only document that represents successful completion of high school. Among the array of possibilities are standard diplomas, diplomas with endorsements, and certificates of attendance, to note a few.

Understanding the range of requirements for LEP students to successfully "complete school" is thus a complicated but important task. This is the case for at least two reasons. First, we know that there is a high rate of dropping out of school among some groups of students that might include large numbers of LEP students. Specifically, Hispanic students have been found to drop out more often than students from other ethnic groups (NCES, 1997). While Hispanic students are not necessarily LEP students, we do not have data on LEP students; but we do get an estimate from this statistic. Second, it has been found that high stakes testing often results in academic tracking, grade retention, and non-graduation (Cuenca, 1991). In particular, there is evidence (Asher cited in Cuenca, 1991) that schools have been tracking LEP students into classes for low-performing students and students with learning disabilities, resulting in the exclusion of their scores from the reported average performance of schools. The possibility of these LEP students' scores lowering the class or school average is thus avoided. Without the LEP students' scores, it is assumed that the school's average score will be higher and thus will compare more

favorably with other schools. The retention of LEP students also is a significant concern since it has been shown that there is a higher rate of dropouts among those students who have been retained (Cuenca, 1991), a finding that does not bode well for LEP students.

As states and schools implement high school graduation requirements, they are faced with the challenge of ensuring that they include students with limited English proficiency. This is particularly challenging when passing a test is part of the graduation requirement. We know that LEP students have either been excluded from statewide assessment programs or tested inappropriately (Rivera & Vincent, 1996). While relatively small numbers of LEP students in the past made it relatively easy for assessment systems to ignore them (except in certain states, such as Texas and California), the situation has changed. The population of children whose first language is other than English and who are designated as having limited English proficiency is growing significantly (Hodgkinson & Outtz, 1992), with the estimated growth rate for LEP students more than twice that of children in the general population (CCSSO, 1990).

Rivera and Vincent (1996) surveyed assessment personnel or their designees regarding high school graduation requirements for LEP students. This research showed that these policies and practices were inappropriate given the characteristics of the LEP population. In particular, these authors noted that state assessments typically are developed for and validated with monolingual English speakers. Therefore, the assessments may not appropriately assess the performance of LEP students who by definition are different from monolingual English speakers in fundamental ways. Essentially, Rivera and Vincent expressed concern about the validity of the LEP students' scores on such tests. The purpose of the current study is to extend the work of Rivera and Vincent (1996) by examining all state-level requirements for graduation and by determining whether these result in different avenues for exiting high school. Specifically, we asked the following questions:

1. How are state graduation requirements applied to LEP students?

2. Do LEP students receive a standard diploma upon completion of their studies, or some type of modified exit document (e.g., special diploma or certificate of completion)?

Method

To report on state high school graduation requirements for LEP students, we obtained and reviewed information from each state's department of education. We collected this information in two ways. We first reviewed existing documents, and later information by a telephone request.

The existing documents had been obtained as part of a previous study that dealt with states' policies for graduation requirements for students with disabilities (Thurlow, Ysseldyke, & Reid, 1997). State documentation often took the form of state statute or regulations from the department of education.

If our existing information was not relevant or adequate, we called that state's assessment director, the state department of education, or other appropriate contacts able to provide additional information. Over the phone we requested information regarding the state's graduation requirements for LEP students. Specifically, we asked about course requirements, graduation exam requirements, and diploma options for LEP students. A total of six states could not be reached by phone. Therefore, we sent a faxed request to these states for this information. A follow-up phone call was then placed if there was no response to the fax. In total, we received information from all states. All information was collected between November 1996 and June 1997.

Results

In general, we found that it was difficult to obtain state information regarding high school graduation requirements for students with limited English proficiency. State documentation that described general high school graduation requirements often did not refer to LEP students (or to students identified with comparable terms such as English language learners, bilingual students, and so on). Therefore, it was difficult to determine whether the requirements for LEP students were the same as those for regular education students, or whether there were alternative policies in place but not explicitly stated (e.g., LEP students may have been considered a special population). Our follow up calls and faxes often did not yield more descriptive or explicit information. Further, when asked over the phone, some state representatives were unfamiliar with the terms "LEP" or English as a Second Language (ESL). Often, we were unable to identify a state department or contact person dealing with issues about this population.

High school graduation requirements for each state, including diploma options and issues pertaining to LEP students, are provided in the Appendix. They are summarized here.

A minimum graduation requirement for most states was the successful completion of Carnegie course units. From our review of state documentation, we found that students in 44 states must meet this minimum requirement. The remaining six states are those with requirements set by the local education agency (LEA). A summary of each state's course unit requirements is presented in Table 1. The state of Indiana also requires its students to pass a specific number of course credits, but it does not use standard Carnegie units.

Table 1. High School Course Credit Requirements for Graduation

State	Traditional Academic				Supporting		Other	Electives	Total
	English	Math	Science	Social Studies	Health/ Phys Ed	Fine Arts			
Alabama	4	4	4	4	1.5	.5	.5	5.5	24
Alaska	4	2	2	3	1	-		9	21
Arizona	4	2	2	2.5	-	1	.5	8	20
Arkansas	4	3	3	2	1	.5	3.5	3	21
California	3	2	2	3	2	-	1	-	12
Colorado	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*
Connecticut	4	3	2	3	1	-	1	1	20
Delaware	4	2	2	3	1.5	-	1	6.5	20
Florida	4	3	3	2.5	1	-	1.5	9	24
Georgia	4	3	3	3	1	-	1	6	21
Hawaii	4	3	3	4	2	-	-	6	22
Idaho	4	2	2	2	1.5	-	3.5	6	21
Illinois	3	2	1	2	4.5	1.25	.25	2.25	16
Indiana	4	4	4	3	1	-	-	8	19.5, +
Iowa	-	-	-	1.5	-	-	-	-	*
Kansas	4	2	2	3	1	-	-	9	21
Kentucky	5	3	2	2	1	-	1	8	22
Louisiana	4	4	3	3	2	-	.5	7.5	23
Maine	4	2	2	2	1.5	1	-	3.5	16
Maryland	4	3	2	3	1	1	2	5	21
Massachusetts	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	-	*
Michigan	4	.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	*
Minnesota	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	++
Mississippi	4	3	2	3	-	-	-	-	18
Missouri	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	10	22
Montana	4	2	2	2	1	1	1	7	20
Nebraska	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*, **
Nevada	4	2	2	2	2.5	1	.5	8.5	22.5
New Hampshire	4	2	2	2	1.25	.5	1	7	19.75
New Jersey	4	3	2	3	4	1.5	.5	4	21.5
New Mexico	4	3	2	3	1	-	1	9	23
New York	4	2	2	4	2.5	-	1	3-5	18.5
North Carolina	4	3	3	3	1	-	-	4	20
North Dakota	4	2	2	3	1	-	1	5	17
Ohio	3	2	1	2	1	-	3	9	18
Oklahoma	4	3	2	2	0	1	1	8	21
Oregon	3	2	2	3.5	2	1	.5	8	22
Pennsylvania	4	3	3	3	1	2	-	5	21
Rhode Island	4	2	2	2	-	-	-	6	16
South Carolina	4	4	4	4	1	-	3	4	24+++
South Dakota	4	2	2	3	-	.5	.5	8	20
Tennessee	4	3	3	3	1	1	2	3	20+++
Texas	4	3	3	4	2	1	4	3	24
Utah	3	2	2	3	2	1.5	1	9.5	24
Vermont	4	5	***	3	1.5	1	-	-	14.5
Virginia	4	2	2	3	2	1	1	6	21
Washington	3	2	2	2.5	2	1	1	5.5	19
West Virginia	4	3	3	3	2	1	-	4	21
Wisconsin	4	2	2	3	2	-	8.5	-	21.5
Wyoming	4	2	2	3	-	-	5	5	18*

* Determined by LEA ** 200 high school credit hours *** 5 credits between Math and Science

\+ The state of Indiana does not use standard Carnegie units.

++ Minnesota is transitioning to content standards in its Profile of Learning.

+++ Students in South Carolina and Tennessee have more than one pathway to graduation. SC: Technical Preparation, Dual Path, and College Preparation; TN: Technical Preparation and University Preparation.

LEAs have the option of establishing their own requirements. Currently, the requirements for course units are determined by a LEA in the following six states: Colorado, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, and Wyoming. The policies for implementing graduation standards varies in each of these six states. In Colorado, the LEAs are solely responsible for determining requirements for graduation including course units. In Nebraska, 200 credit hours are required by the state, but the distribution of credits is left to the discretion of the LEAs, with the requirement that 80% of the credits must be in the core curriculum subjects of English, math, science, and social science. For the remaining four states (Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Wyoming) the state has set some minimum standards and the LEAs add to these requirements. To receive full accreditation in Wyoming, for example, school districts must meet standards (including course units) that are set by the State Board of Education.

The actual number of credits varies from state to state. For example, the requirement in California is the completion of 12 units of credits while the requirement in Alabama, Florida, South Carolina, Texas, and Utah is the completion of 24 units of credits. Most policies that establish the specific number of credits are determined at the state level.

In addition to course unit requirements, some states require their students to participate in and pass an exit exam (e.g., graduation exam, competency test, state assessment). Exit exams typically cover core subject areas to which all students are traditionally exposed such as language arts, math, and writing. These exams are structured to assess students' most basic level of knowledge in core areas or "high standards" in the areas. Students must reach a cutoff score to graduate and to be eligible to receive their high school diploma. Currently, 19 states have some form of exit exam in place on a statewide basis (see Figure 1), and three states (Arizona, Arkansas, and Vermont) are in the process of developing and implementing a graduation test. Table 2 provides information about state high school graduation exams. Similar to policies that establish course units at the level of the local education agency, several states allow LEAs to determine their own policies for implementing exit exams.

Some states not included in Table 2 have policies that are similar to graduation exam requirements. For example, while most states with exit exams require students to participate, there are two states with a policy of voluntary participation. Students in both Delaware and Michigan can elect to take an exam if they wish to receive an endorsed diploma or a "meritorious" certificate. Illinois does not require students to pass exams in traditional academic areas, but does require that students pass an exam on American patriotism and the principles of representative government.

Most often, state graduation exam policies mandate the use of a state-approved test that is implemented on a statewide basis. However, there are variations on this theme. In Minnesota, students must pass exit exams as part of their high school graduation requirements, but they are

not required to use the state's official assessments, called the "Basic Standards Tests." School districts can use any test from an approved list as long as it has been equated to the state assessments.

In most states with the exit exam requirement, students who do not meet passing standards do not receive high school diplomas. In essence then, it is possible for a student who has met all other graduation requirements (e.g., course units) to leave high school without formal documentation of participation in school. Some states, however, provide options or alternative graduation documents for those students who do not meet the exit exam requirement. Students in Indiana, for example, who have earned enough credits to graduate, but who have not passed the state's Graduation Test, may still graduate with a standard diploma by appeal to the State Board. Further, both New Mexico and South Carolina grant students who have not passed the High School Competency Examination or the Basic Skills Assessment Program a certificate of completion upon graduation. These state policies are applied equally to all students, including limited English proficient students.

Figure 1. States Requiring Exit Exams

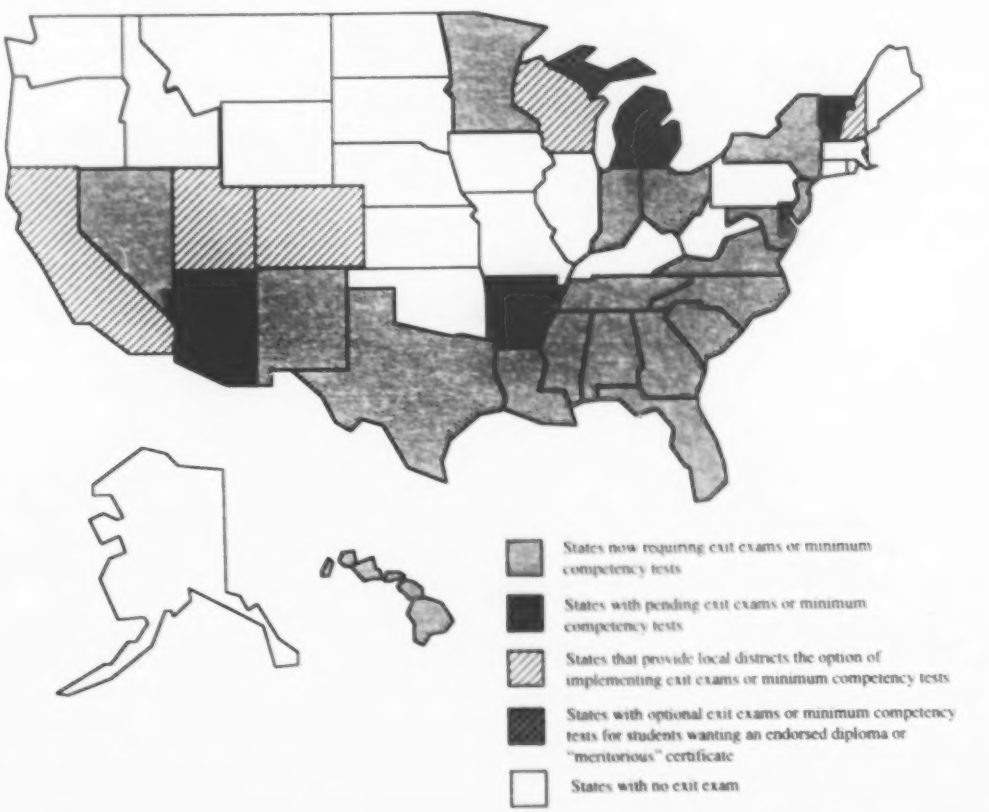
States now requiring exit exams or minimum competency tests
States with pending exit exams or minimum competency tests
States that provide local districts the option of implementing exit exams or minimum competency tests
States with optional exit exams or minimum competency tests for students wanting an endorsed diploma or "meritorious" certificate
States with no exit exam

Table 2. Information on State Graduation Exams

State	Name of Test	LA	M	R	W	SS	SC	CT	C	Grade[a]	Type[b]
AL	High School Basic Skills Exit Exam	X	X	X						11, 12	CRT
FL	High School Competency Test		X	X	X					11	CRT
GA	GA High School Graduation Tests	X	X		X	X	X			11	CRT[c]
HI	Test of Essential Competencies								X	11	CRT
IN	High School Graduation Test	X	X							10	CRT
LA	LA Graduation Test Examination	X	X		X	X	X			10, 11	CRT[c]
MD	MD Functional Testing Program		X	X	X			X		7	CRT[c]
MN	MN Basic Standards Test		X	X	X					8, 10	CRT
MS	Functional Literacy Examination		X	X	X					11	CRT[c]
NV	High School Proficiency Examination Program		X	X	X					11	CRT[c]
NJ	Grade 11 Proficiency Test		X	X	X					11, 12	CRT[c]
NM	High School Competency Examination	X	X	X		X	X			10	CRT[c]
NY	Regency Competency Testing		X	X	X	X	X			9-11	CRT[c]
NC	Competency Testing		X	X						10	CRT/-NRT
OH	9th Grade Proficiency Testing		X	X	X			X		12	CRT[c]
SC	Basic Skills Assessment Program		X	X	X					10	CRT[c]
TN	Competency Testing	X	X	X		X	X			9-12	CRT
TX	TX Assessment of Academic Skills		X	X	X					10	CRT[c]
VA	Literacy Passport Test		X	X	X					9	CRT[c]

Note: Information in this table is based on information presented in Part 3.2 (pp. 210–222) of Bond, Braskamp, and Van der Ploeg (1995).

The content areas listed are: LA=Language Arts, M=Mathematics, R=Reading, W=Writing, SS=Social Studies, SC=Science, CT=Citizenship, C=Competencies, Undefined.

[a] Grade listed is grade at which test is first administered. When two grades are listed, it is because different subject areas are first administered in different grades.

[b] CRT=Criterion-Referenced Test; NRT=Norm-Referenced Test

[c] Includes a writing sample

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We found that state exit exam policies almost always were applied equally to LEP and regular education students. That is, we found few separate or different requirements applicable to the LEP population. LEP students are required to participate in the exams and pass with the same cutoff scores. Some states, however, allowed modifications or accommodations to the test specific to LEP students. For example, New York's regulations permit students whose native language is not English to demonstrate academic competency through alternative procedures other than the New York State Competency Examination program. Additionally, the state has regulations that permit transfer students to be exempted from testing.

Our review of diploma options offered by states revealed that all states have the standard diploma as an option for all students (students in regular education, students with limited English proficiency, and students with disabilities). Further, we found that LEP students were required to meet the same standards as other students in regular education to receive a standard high school diploma. The requirements themselves, however, varied from state to state. Table 3 shows the various requirements that must be met to be eligible for a standard diploma. States can be grouped into five categories of diploma requirements: (a) course credits only, (b) credits and exit exam, (c) credits, exit exam, and other requirements, (d) not defined, or states that allow the LEA to determine its own requirements, and (e) other requirements. The minimum requirement for graduation in most states was credits only (19 states) and credits plus exit exam (15 states).

Table 3. Standard Diploma Requirements for Students with Limited English Proficiency

Requirements	No. of States Using Option	States
Credits Only	19	Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Idaho, Kentucky, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin
Credits + Exit Exam	15	Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia
Credits + Exit Exam + Other	4	Alabama, Minnesota, Nevada, South Carolina
Not defined or LEA defined	7	California, Colorado, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, Wyoming
Other	5	Delaware, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Pennsylvania

Some states require their students to meet additional standards beyond the course unit or graduation exam prior to graduation. For example, students in Alabama, Delaware, Maine, Nevada, and South Carolina must meet computer literacy/proficiency standards. Students in Kansas must take and pass a nine week course in Kansas history or government. In addition to meeting a course unit requirement, students in Pennsylvania must achieve 52 student learning outcomes and complete a project in one or more areas of concentrated study. Finally, as the state of Minnesota implements higher graduation standards through special classroom assessments (called the Profile of Learning), the plan is to require students to (a) pass graduation exams, and (b) achieve the Profile of Learning standards. States in the "not defined" or LEA category are those in which the local education agency determines its own requirements.

Discussion

From our survey of states' policies for high school graduation, we found that students with limited English proficiency, in general, must meet the same requirements as other students in general education to receive a high school diploma. Specifically, students with limited English proficiency are required to meet the same course unit requirements and, if applicable, generally are required to take the same exit exam and pass with the same cut-off score. While the main graduation requirements are the same, there are some policies that apply only for LEP students.

The state of Minnesota is developing a policy that would create a progress record of student achievement. State law now requires students in Minnesota to take and pass Basic Standards Exams in Reading, Math, and Writing to receive a high school diploma. If a student with limited English proficiency takes a version of the exam that has been translated into his or her native language, a notation will appear on the student's transcript ("Pass Translate"). As far as can be determined from other states' written documents, we found no similar policy; that is, besides Minnesota, there is no state that has the policy of noting LEP status on a student's transcript or diploma. However, in many states if a student takes a course from the English as a Second Language (ESL) program, the course's "ESL" designation will be noted on the student's course transcript.

In 1968, Congress passed the *Bilingual Education Act*, Title VII of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA). In 1994, the ESEA was reauthorized as the *Improving America's Schools* Act (IASA) of 1994. The IASA provides support to states, schools, and districts in their efforts to help all students achieve high academic standards. Title VII is directed toward helping schools provide quality instruction and equal educational opportunities to students with limited English proficiency. This federal directive established a federal policy of bilingual education and allocated funds to create appropriate instructional programs. Specifically, Title VII provides LEAs and

State Education Agencies (SEAs) the funding to implement and expand programs that meet the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students. It is important to note that the *Bilingual Education Act* does not mandate that states and schools specifically adopt bilingual education to comply with this federal law. Further, the 1973 Supreme Court decision of Lau v. Nichols requires schools to ensure that limited English proficient students understand the curriculum. This requirement does not specify a method of compliance (e.g., bilingual education), but rather leaves it up to the discretion of the school. Such techniques include English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, bilingual education, immersion bilingual education, and others. To help states to meet the needs of LEP students and to ensure their compliance with state and federal guidelines on the provision of services for LEP students, each state educational agency maintains a contact for bilingual education programs. Subsequently, each state's interpretation of guidelines results in state-by-state variability in the provision of such services.

Given the content of the state documentation we received, it was often not possible to determine the manner in which states chose to comply with state and federal guidelines. Some states (e.g., Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Maine, and Pennsylvania) noted the existence of such specific provisions as bilingual education, ESL programs, and transitional bilingual education programs. Other states describe, in general terms, programs for students of limited English proficiency. For example, Connecticut's "Position Statement on the Education of Students Acquiring English as a Second Language" states that the student's academic program will use both native language and English instruction, and that each school district is required to have staff members who are proficient in English and at least one other language.

It is clear from the results of this study, combined with the increasing populations of LEP students in our schools, that there are several challenges to be addressed if we are to continue to work toward increasing graduation rates for all students. Programs to help students gain the content they need to pass graduation exams at the same time that they acquire English are essential (see Chamot, 1992). Responsible and reasonable assessment techniques — ones that accommodate student needs — will be important as well when states require that students pass assessments in order to graduate. Only through concerted efforts in these areas will we make progress toward increasing the graduation rates of all students in our nation's schools.

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Appendix

State High School Graduation Requirements

State	Course Credits		Graduation Test	Students with Limited English Proficiency
Alabama	English	4	Alabama High School Exit Exam • Language • Math • Reading administered twice in grades 11 & 12 to give add'l opps. to pass for those failing it in 11th grade	• Same graduation requirements for standard diploma • To receive diploma, must have Carnegie Units plus pass exam • If have credits, but don't pass exam, then certificate • If pass exam, but do not have credits, then receive certificate • All students can receive one of two diplomas: a regular diploma, or an advanced diploma • The LEA issues the diploma and can therefore offer different diploma options. • All students must become computer literate
	Math	4		
	Science	4		
	Soc. Studies	4		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1.5		
	Fine Arts	.5		
	Other	1		
	Electives	5.5		
	Total	**24**		
Alaska	English	4	None	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other			
	Electives	9		
	Total	**21**		
Arizona	English	4	None	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	2.5		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	-		
	Fine Arts	1		
	Other	.5		
	Electives	8		
	Total	**20**		

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State	Course Credits		Graduation Test	Students with Limited English Proficiency
Arkansas	English	4	None	• Same graduation requirements • All students can receive either a standard diploma or an advanced diploma
	Math	3		
	Science	3		
	Soc. Studies	2		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1		
	Fine Arts	.5		
	Other	3.5		
	Electives	3		
	Total	**21**		
California	English	3	Proficiency test by LEA (districts choose test and set standards)	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	2		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	1		
	Electives	1		
	Total	**12**		
Colorado	Local Education Agency determines		May be required by LEA	• All students meeting graduation requirements of LEA receive standard diploma • All students who attend regularly, but do not meet requirements for standard diploma or IEP diploma receive certificate of attendance or completion • No standard exit document; state encourages use of standard diploma
Connecticut	English	4	None	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	3		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other			
	Electives	1		
	Total	**20**		

State	Course Credits		Graduation Test	Students with Limited English Proficiency
Delaware	English	4	None	• Same graduation requirements • All students must become computer literate
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1.5		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	1		
	Electives	6.5		
	Total	**20**		
Florida	English	4	High School Competency Test • Math • Reading • Writing	• All students receive either a standard diploma or a certificate of completion • Students must earn a passing score on the MCT to qualify for a regular high school diploma. Students can receive one of the following: 1. standard diploma, 2. Florida gold seal vocational endorsement, 3. differentiated diplomas to those exceeding the prescribed minimums, 4. certificate of completion, and 5. special diploma for students in special education
	Math	3		
	Science	3		
	Soc. Studies	2.5		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	1.5		
	Electives	9		
	Total	**24**		
Georgia	English	4	Georgia High School Graduation Test • English/Lang. Arts • Math • Science • Soc. Studies • Writing	• Same graduation requirements • If students do not pass all of the required graduation tests, but have met all other graduation requirements, they are eligible for a High School Performance Certificate
	Math	3		
	Science	3		
	Soc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	1		
	Electives	6		
	Total	**21**		
Hawaii	English	4	Hawaii State Test of Essential Competencies (HSTEC) 16 competencies; accommodations/modifications made; students may retake until they pass	• Limited-English speaking students with less than one continuous year in Hawaii public schools are not required to participate in the HSTEC • Any student who does not meet all graduation requirements are issued certificates: 1. certificate of course completion, and 2. certificate of completion
	Math	3		
	Science	3		
	Soc. Studies	4		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	2		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	-		
	Electives	6		
	Total	**22**		

State	Course Credits		Graduation Test	Students with Limited English Proficiency
Idaho	English	4	No exit exam; seniors must meet C average in core classes (English, Math, Reading, Speech) or receive criterion score on test of academic proficiency and on writing test	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	2		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1.5		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	3.5		
	Electives	6		
	Total	**21**		
Illinois	English	3	Students must pass an exam on American patriotism and the principles of representative government; LEA may require additional exam	• Same graduation requirements • LEA can determine whether there is a different diploma from regular, but policy must be published
	Math	2		
	Science	1		
	Soc. Studies	2		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	4.5		
	Fine Arts	1.25		
	Other	.25		
	Electives	2.25		
	Total	**16**		
Indiana	English	4	Graduation Test • Language Arts • Math	• Same graduation requirements • Students who do not pass the Graduation Test may still graduate by appealing to the State Board
	Math	4		
	Science	4		
	Soc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	-		
	Electives	8		
	Total	**9.5**		
Iowa	English	-	None	• Each LEA determines policy
	Math	-		
	Science	-		
	Soc. Studies	1.5		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	-		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	-		
	Electives	-		
	Total	-		

State	Course Credits		Graduation Test	Students with Limited English Proficiency
Kansas	English	4	None	• Same graduation requirements • Standard diploma upon completion of state requirements • LEA may have alternative graduation requirements policy • An additional graduation requirement for all students is a 9 week course in KS history or government
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	-		
	Electives	9		
	Total	**21**		
Kentucky	English	5	None	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	3		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	2		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	1		
	Electives	8		
	Total	**22**		
Louisiana	English	4	LA Graduation Test • Language Arts • Math • Writing • Social Studies • Science	• Same requirements
	Math	4		
	Science	3		
	Soc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	2		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	.5		
	Electives	7.5		
	Total	**23**		
Maine	English	4	None	• Same requirements • All students must pass computer proficiency standards
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	2		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1.5		
	Fine Arts	1		
	Other	-		
	Electives	3.5		
	Total	**16**		

State	Course Credits		Graduation Test	Students with Limited English Proficiency
Maryland	English	4	• MD Functional Testing Program (MFT)	• LEP students can choose to be exempt from one census administration of each of the functional tests, but all students must pass all four tests to graduate
	Math	3	— Math	
	Science	2	— Reading	
	Soc. Studies	3	— Writing	
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1	• MD Test of Citizenship Skills	• Diplomas and certificates offered: 1. state diploma, 2. enrollment, competency and credit, 3. student service
	Fine Arts	1		
	Other	2		
	Electives	5		
	Total	**21**		
Massachusetts	Social Studies	1	None	• Same graduation requirements
	Health/Phys. Ed.	4		• State does not mandate course units
	Remainder determined by LEA			• State test is in the works.
				• Local boards determine additional requirements
Michigan	English	4		• Same requirements
	Math	.5		• All students may take the Michigan High School Proficiency Test for an endorsed diploma
	Remainder determined by LEA			
Minnesota	Minnesota is transitioning to content standards in its Profile of Learning.		MN Basic Standards Test • Math • Reading • Writing	• Same graduation requirements
				• If LEP student takes a translated version of the Basic Standards Tests, "Pass-Translated" is noted on the transcript
				• Students must achieve Profile of Learning Standards
Mississippi	English	4	Functional Literacy Exam	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	3	• Math	
	Science	2	• Reading	
	Soc. Studies	3	• Writing	
	Health/Phys. Ed.	-		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	-		
	Electives	-		
	Total	**18**		

State	Course Credits		Graduation Test	Students with Limited English Proficiency
Missouri	English	3	None	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	2		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1		
	Fine Arts	1		
	Other	1		
	Electives	10		
	Total	**22**		
Montana	English	4	None	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	2		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1		
	Fine Arts	1		
	Other	1		
	Electives	7		
	Total	**20**		
Nebraska	200 credit hours; LEA determines; 80% from core curriculum (English, Math, Science, Social Studies)		None	• Same graduation requirements • Requirements are determined by LEA; type of diploma determined by LEA
Nevada	English	4	Nevada High School Proficiency Examination Program (NPEP) • Math • Reading • Writing	• Same graduation requirements • Adjusted diploma is an LEA prerogative • Students must demonstrate computer proficiency
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	2		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	2.5		
	Fine Arts	1		
	Other	.5		
	Electives	8.5		
	Total	**22.5**		
New Hampshire	English	4	None	• Same graduation requirements • Academic programs may be modified to assist students in fulfilling graduation requirements • Particular requirements can be waived by Commissioner of Education if requested by local school board and determined to be in the best interest of the student
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	2		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1.25		
	Fine Arts	.5		
	Other	1		
	Electives	7		
	Total	**19.75**		

State	Course Credits		Graduation Test	Students with Limited English Proficiency
New Jersey	English	4	Grade 11 Proficiency Test	• LEP students who enter NJ schools in grade 9 or later and who demonstrate that they have attained state minimum levels of proficiency through the Special Review Assessment (SRA) in their native language must take the Maculaitis Assessment Program (MAP) and attain a passing score to be eligible for a state-endorsed high school diploma
	Math	3	• Math	
	Science	2	• Reading	
	Soc. Studies	3	• Writing	
	Health/Phys. Ed	4		
	Fine Arts	1.5		
	Other	.5		
	Electives	4		
	Total	**21.5**		
New Mexico	English	4	New Mexico High School Competency Exam	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	3	• Language Arts	• The district should implement alternative assessment methods to determine mastery of exit competencies for those students with limited English language skills who are exempted from the High School Competency Examination
	Science	2	• Math	
	Soc. Studies	3	• Reading	
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1	• Science	
	Fine Arts	-	• Soc. Science	
	Other	1		• Students not passing the exam will receive a certificate of completion
	Electives	9		
	Total	**23**		
New York	English	4	Regents Competency Testing	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	2	• Math	• Students need coursework and exams to receive Regents diploma; if coursework and no exams, then they will receive a local diploma
	Science	2	• Reading	
	Soc. Studies	4	• Writing	
	Health/Phys. Ed.	2.5	• Science	
	Fine Arts	-	• Social Studies	
	Other	1	Alternative testing procedures used for LEP students	• Students whose native language is not English will be given the opportunity to demonstrate academic competency through alternative procedures
	Electives	3-5		
	Total	**18.5**		

State	Course Credits		Graduation Test	Students with Limited English Proficiency
North Carolina	English	4	Competency Testing • Math • Reading	• LEP students may be exempted from one subject test and be tested on others. If an LEP student is exempted from the tests, a statement indicating the consequences (not graduating with a diploma) should be explained. • Students who do not pass the competency tests, but satisfy all state and graduation requirements will receive certificate of attendance and will be allowed by the LEA to participate in graduation exercises
	Math	3		
	Science	3		
	Soc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	-		
	Electives	4		
	Total	**20**		
North Dakota	English	4	None	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	1		
	Electives	5		
	Total	**17**		
Ohio	English	3	Ninth Grade Proficiency Tests • Math • Reading • Writing • Citizenship	• Same graduation requirements • LEP students may take advantage of testing accommodations (interpreter, dictionary, extended time, etc.)
	Math	2		
	Science	1		
	Soc. Studies	2		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	3		
	Electives	9		
	Total	**18**		
Oklahoma	English	4	None	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	3		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	2		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	0		
	Fine Arts	1		
	Other	1		
	Electives	8		
	Total	**21**		

State	Course Credits		Graduation Test	Students with Limited English Proficiency
Oregon	English	3	None	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	3.5		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	2		
	Fine Arts	1		
	Other	.5		
	Electives	8		
	Total	**22**		
Pennsylvania	English	4	None	• Same graduation requirements • To graduate all students must: demonstrate achievement on the student learning outcomes, and complete a project in one or more areas of concentrated study
	Math	3		
	Science	3		
	Soc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1		
	Fine Arts	2		
	Other	-		
	Electives	5		
	Total	**21**		
Rhode Island	English	4	None	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	2		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	-		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	-		
	Electives	6		
	Total	**16**		
South Carolina	English	4	Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP) • Math • Reading • Writing	• Same graduation requirements • Certificate of completion if student does not pass the BSAP • LEP permitted alternate writing score scale that places emphasis on the conveyance of meaning • All students must also complete a study and pass an exam on the provision and principles of the US Constitution and American institution and ideals
	Math	4		
	Science	4		
	Soc. Studies	4		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	3		
	Electives	4		
	Total	**24**		

State	Course Credits		Graduation Test	Students with Limited English Proficiency
South Dakota	English	4	None	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	-		
	Fine Arts	.5		
	Other	.5		
	Electives	8		
	Total	**20**		
Tennessee	English	4	Competency testing	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	3	• Language	• Students receive a standard state diploma, a special education diploma, or a certificate of completion
	Science	3	• Math	
	Soc. Studies	1	• Reading	
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1	• Science	
	Fine Arts	2	• Soc. Studies	
	Other	2		
	Electives	3		
	Total	**20**		
Texas	English	4	Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	3	• Math	• No student shall be exempted from an exit level or end-of-course test based on LEP. However, a student who is a recent immigrant LEP may postpone only one time the initial administration of the TAAS
	Science	3	• Writing	
	Soc. Studies	4	• Reading	
	Health/Phys. Ed.	2		
	Fine Arts	1		
	Other	4		
	Electives	3		
	Total	**24**		• Students receive one diploma with one of three seals: regular, advanced, or honors
Utah	English	3	None	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	2		
	Fine Arts	1.5		
	Other	1		
	Electives	9.5		
	Total	**24**		

State	Course Credits		Graduation Test	Students with Limited English Proficiency
Vermont	English	4	None	• Same graduation requirements
	Math & Science	5		
	Soc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	1.5		
	Fine Arts	1		
	Other	-		
	Electives	-		
	Total	**14.5**		
Virginia	English	4	Literacy Passport Test (LPT) • Math • Reading • Writing	• Same graduation requirements • Students can receive one of two diplomas: 21 credit diploma, or a 23 advanced credit diploma • If a student does not qualify for a diploma by failing to pass the LPT, the student may be awarded a certificate granted by the local school board
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	oc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	2		
	Fine Arts	1		
	Other	1		
	Electives	6		
	Total	**21**		
Washington	English	3	None	• Same graduation requirements • No student is denied opportunity to earn diploma because of limitations of ability—allows accommodations or requirement exemptions
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	2.5		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	2		
	Fine Arts	1		
	Other	1		
	Electives	5.5		
	Total	**19**		
West Virginia	English	4	None	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	3		
	Science	3		
	Soc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	2		
	Fine Arts	1		
	Other	-		
	Electives	4		
	Total	**21**		

State	Course Credits		Graduation Test	Students with Limited English Proficiency
Wisconsin	English	4	None	• Same graduation requirements
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	2		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	8.5		
	Electives	-		
	Total	**21.5**		
Wyoming	English	4	None	• Same graduation requirements • Graduation requirements for all students will change by July 97 due to a court order • Requirements are determined by LEA
	Math	2		
	Science	2		
	Soc. Studies	3		
	Health/Phys. Ed.	-		
	Fine Arts	-		
	Other	5		
	Electives	5		
	Total	**18**		
	Remainder determined by LEA			

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